

Squirrelpox Timeline

1876 to 2010



1876-early 1900s

Grey squirrels first introduced to the UK from America. Numbers increased significantly over the next 30 years.

1903-1929

The Highland Squirrel Club shoots over 82,000 red squirrels in an attempt to control the damage caused to trees.

1900-1930

Unknown disease devastates populations of red squirrels.

1962

The veterinary press reports a disease outbreak in Shropshire could be due to a poxvirus.

1981

A poxvirus was confirmed as the cause of a fatal disease in a red squirrel in Norfolk.

2002

It is proved that squirrelpox virus causes disease in red squirrels whilst appearing to leave grey squirrels unharmed.

2005

Grey squirrels carrying the virus are detected in Scotland for the first time.

2007-2010

The Scottish Government supports a selective culling campaign to try and prevent the spread of squirrelpox.

2007

The first case of squirrelpox in a Scottish red squirrel is found near Lockerbie.

1870-1900

1900-2000

2000-2010

1996

Moredun develops a blood test used to monitor exposure to squirrelpox.

2000

Moredun reports the finding of the first blood test survey of red and grey squirrels.

2003

Moredun reports the first genetic characterisation of the virus.

2006

Moredun confirms that genetic relationship between squirrelpox virus and other poxviruses.

2009

Moredun begins work on developing a squirrelpox vaccine with funding from The Wildlife Ark Trust.

Moredun's Milestones

